WOMEN OF VALUE

A History of Women in the Valuation Department and Valuation New Zealand 1896-1993

BRONWYN DALLEY

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VALUATION DEPT.
DISTRICT OFFICE
16 SEP 1993
TE KUITI

BRONWYN DALLEY

A Women's Suffrage Centenary Project 1993

Valuation New Zealand in association with
the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs

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VNZ collection.

Contents

Foreword 4

Introduction 5

The Valuation Department and Valuation New Zealand 7

Pioneers of a Quiet Invasion, 1898 – 1921 12

'Deprived of Permanent Status', 1921 – 1946 24

A New Era, 1947 – 1972 32

'A Good Career for Women', 1973 – 43

A Women's Chronology of the Valuation Department and Valuation New Zealand 52

Notes 54

Sources 55

Foreword

The centennial of Women's Suffrage has achieved a remarkable response from public sector organisations and from the community, evidenced by the very extensive and interesting calendar of events planned for 1993.

In examining the wide diversity of the organisations which have, and are contributing to celebrating the achievement of women in New Zealand society and business, it is apparent that most of those organisations are women's organisations. For this reason, it is pleasing that Valuation New Zealand, long a male-dominated bastion, has been able to pay tribute to the many women staff who have toiled over the years since the turn of the century, in our district offices, regional offices and head office.

Although our history shows few women have reached senior management levels, this is now changing and our organisation has seen in its more recent past several well qualified women in management and senior executive positions. There have also been a number of women of character within our organisation who have strongly influenced our culture and assisted their colleagues achieve career aspirations.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by the wives and partners of our male staff – this background support has been significant in our business achievement.

Valuation New Zealand salutes those women who have worked tirelessly for the achievement of the department's goals. We hope this very interesting record suitably recognises those who have left our staff as much as those who are making a career with us.

We thank Dr Bronwyn Dalley, and Chief Historian Jock Phillips of the Department of Internal Affairs, for their help and support in the preparation of this book.

Hamish McDonald
Valuer General

Introduction

The centenary of women's suffrage in 1993 provides an opportunity to reflect on the contributions women have made to New Zealand society. Valuation New Zealand (VNZ), wishing to have a record of women's role in the department, commissioned the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs to prepare this history.

The booklet focuses on women in the Valuation Department and VNZ and also offers insights into the status of women within the wider public service. Changes in the public service, such as restrictions on the employment of women in the 1920s or the introduction of equal pay for public servants in the 1960s, have influenced the position of women in the general workforce. This booklet allows us to view these changes through the experiences of women in one government department.

The story of women's employment in the Valuation Department and VNZ brings into the historical picture all women who have worked in the public service. Women have always worked for government departments, but most attention has been directed towards those in the professional, clerical and administrative sections. Cleaners, and women who worked on a temporary basis, have disappeared from view.

Some of these unrecorded workers have been recovered in this history. The earliest women employed in the Valuation Department were cleaners, beginning from 1898; others worked as temporary clerical officers until the first permanent woman was appointed in 1903. The stories of these women provide a new and broader perspective on women's varied contribution to the public service. The first of the temporary staff, for instance, was classed as a clerical officer, but spent several months working as a temporary district valuer in the New Plymouth region in 1903. One wonders if there were other women, also classed as clerical officers, who were in fact valuers prior to the 1970s when women re-entered the profession.

It has not been possible to focus on every occupational group at all stages throughout this history. Instead, different groups of women are emphasised at different periods. 'Cadettes', clerical assistants, secretarial staff and cleaners are the focus of Chapters 2 and 3; Bradma machine operators, clerical staff, computer operators and valuers are discussed in the final two chapters. Several women currently employed in VNZ agreed to be interviewed, and their words, in edited form, appear in these chapters.

Thanks to all who assisted in preparing this booklet: Deborah Mulliss of VNZ; the staff of VNZ who read and commented on the manuscript; the women who agreed to share their experiences of working for the Valuation Department and VNZ; Bronwyn Labrum; and the staff of the Historical Branch – Fiona McKergow, David Green, Alison Carew, and Jock Phillips.

CHAPTER 1

The Valuation Department and Valuation New Zealand

SINCE 1896, the government has been responsible for creating and maintaining the land valuation rolls which provide details of all landed property in New Zealand. In that year, the Government Valuation of Land Act created the position of Valuer-General whose duties included preparing valuation rolls. These could be used by local authorities, central government and private individuals for raising loans or selling property. Until a comprehensive income tax was introduced in 1929, valuation rolls also provided central government with the information it needed to levy land taxes.

Prior to the 1896 Act, the task of valuing land fell to local authorities or private valuers, and from 1891 all local authorities undertook their own land valuations. There was no standard system of valuing. Local body valuations in particular, according to Minister of Lands John McKenzie, were 'not at all what they ought to be'. He believed that a single, national land valuation system would be more efficient, more uniform, and less costly than any previous method.[1]

Official reports refer to a Government Valuation of Land Department from this time, although the 1896 legislation did not create a new department

B.—17A.

1898.

NEW ZEALAND.

GOVERNMENT VALUATION OF LAND DEPARTMENT.

(REPORT BY THE VALUER GENERAL.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The VALUER-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

Government Valuation of Land Department,
Wellington, 10th August, 1898.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit figures showing the result of the valuation of the land of the colony recently made under "The Government Valuation of Land Act, 1896."

A comparison of these figures with the results of the assessment made in 1891, and published in Return No. B.-20, 1892, may prove interesting, showing, as it does, the increase which has taken place in New Zealand land-values during the past six years. It should be mentioned that the surface-value only of gold-mines is included, and the value of the Government Railways has *not* been included in the present total valuation of £138,591,347.

It will be seen, on reference to the tables, that the increase in the South Island has not been in the same proportion as in the North Island. This is accounted for by the great spread of settlement within the Wellington and Taranaki Districts, and also, in a measure, by the severe droughts which have been experienced in portions of the South Island. The Wellington and Taranaki valuations have been proved to be the reverse of excessive by sales which have taken place since they were made.

While the general valuation-roll continues in force the valuation-rolls of local authorities rating on either capital or unimproved value are compiled therefrom, but the valuation-rolls of local authorities rating on annual value are not affected. The number of local valuation-rolls issued for boroughs, ridings of counties, road, town, and river districts, &c., where rates are levied on the capital or on the unimproved value, was 926; while no local valuation-rolls were prepared in the cases of 98 local districts, where rates are levied on the annual value, and of 13 (such as Kawhia County, groups of islands, &c.), where no rates are levied.

During the currency of the general valuation-roll, the Department is required to keep the local authorities concerned advised of all alterations affecting the rolls. It is necessary that the rolls should at all times be kept up to date, and form a reliable valuation of the land of the colony. This important work can only be successfully carried out by a competent and energetic staff, and, here, I would draw attention to the fact that, since the sitting of the Assessment Courts, there are on hand a very large number of additions and alterations affecting the rolls, which entail much clerical work, in addition to that of the valuers.

I mention a few of the numerous alterations and amendments affecting the rolls: (1) lands alienated from the Crown; (2) lands sold or leased by owners other than the Crown; (3) changes in tenancy; and (4) valuations, made by the department, for lending purposes, which, when they differ from the original valuation, affect the valuation-rolls, as they must necessarily be more recent.

Lands subdivided in most cases require a fresh valuation, so as to show the new apportionment of improvements and unimproved value.

In any local district where rates are levied on the capital or on the unimproved value, and where there is a Borough Council, County Council which levies a general rate, or a Road or Town Board of a county wherein the County Council does not levy a general rate, the total cost of preparing the rolls (including the expenses of valuations and the annually-recurring expenditure in keeping the valuations and other particulars up to date) will be borne in one-third shares by such local authority, the Land and Income-Tax Department, and the Government Valuation of Land Department respectively; and in any other local district or other portion of the colony the cost will be borne in equal shares by the two departments above named.

The one-third or half-cost of valuation, as the case may be, temporarily borne by the Government Valuation of Land Department will, it is hoped, be fully recovered by the contribution from the Advances to Settlers' Office, and fees payable for valuations required by private persons, companies, firms, &c., and the Government Insurance, Public Trust, Stamp, and other public offices and departments. From the foregoing it will be seen that, at the most, only a moderate portion of the cost of the general valuation will become a charge against the Valuation Department.

Formerly, under the Rating Act of 1894, the principal local authorities made the valuations for their districts and bore the whole cost, while the other local authorities rated on the valuations made by the principal local authorities and only paid the actual clerical cost of preparing their own valuation-rolls. This system has been followed in drawing the regulations under the present Act. The Valuation Department makes the valuation, and supplies the principal and other local authorities with valuation-rolls. The one-third share of the cost of valuation is borne by the principal local authority alone, whilst the others pay the actual clerical cost only of compiling their rolls from the general roll.

It is provided under the regulations that the amount due by any principal local authority may be paid by instalments extending over two years. One-half of the amount due is payable on receipt of the valuation-roll, one-quarter within twelve months, and the remaining quarter within two years from the date of such receipt.

With regard to the incidents of the valuation, the number of objections was no greater than in former years, but more difficulty was experienced in holding the sittings of the Assessment Courts owing to the engagements of Magistrates preventing a sequence of sittings such as was obtainable when objections were heard before Reviewers.

Much difference of opinion has been expressed by persons interested with regard to the department's system of valuing improvements, and its action has been misrepresented in some quarters. In very many instances owners have sought to claim, as a deduction from the capital value, the amount originally expended on improvements (instead of the value of the improvements at the date of valuation), and thus reduce the unimproved value to a figure much less than the present selling value of the land, excluding improvements. When, under the Property Assessment Act, tax was levied on the value of land, including improvements, the values placed upon the latter by owners were very small indeed as compared with the values now sought to be placed on the same classes of improvements.

Without doubt errors of judgment have been committed by some valuers, and some instances of careless work have occurred; but it can scarcely be expected that a valuation of the colony could be made without the necessity arising for some corrections. It is, however, part of the present system that assessments can be adjusted at any time if the owners make application for a re-valuation, or if the Valuer-General is of opinion that the value appearing on the roll is incorrect. It is hard to believe that a valuer has been always wrong and an owner always right, seeing that it is the interest of every valuer to earn a reputation for making fair valuations.

Some idea of the work involved may be gathered from the fact that it has been necessary to make some 231,965 separate valuations, of which 119,258 are in the North Island and 112,707 in the South Island. These, together, represent an increase of 23,506 since the assessment of 1891. All particulars shown in the attached form for a certified copy of an entry in the general valuation-roll can be given with regard to each separate valuation, and, in spite of occasional mistakes almost inseparable from a large undertaking, it may fairly be submitted that the valuation has been carefully made and, as a whole, is reliable for practical purposes.

Although the cost of the general valuation has been heavy, it is certain that a long period will elapse before it becomes necessary to make another. Indeed, there will be no necessity for another general valuation at all if the attempt to keep the present one up to date is successful.

Sufficient time has not elapsed since the receipt of rolls by local authorities to enable me to express the opinion that they have given entire satisfaction. The number of complaints has so far been very small, and, from the assurances received from all over the colony, I am satisfied that the officers of local authorities will co-operate with and assist the department in carrying out its duties. Many anomalies and errors have already been set right. Is it too much to ask for a little more time before judgment is passed either for or against the valuation?

I have, &c.,
JOHN MCGOWAN, Valuer-General.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

The first report of the Government Valuation of Land Department, 1898. *AJHR*, 1898, B-17A, pp.1-2.

FORM No. 7.

"THE GOVERNMENT VALUATION OF LAND ACT, 1896."

Certified Copy of Entry in General Valuation-roll.

I HEREBY certify that the following is a true copy of the entry in the General Valuation-roll relating to the property therein described:—

Description of Property.

Valuation number: 9/27/106.

Local district: Windermere Road District.

Subsection or Allotment:

Section: 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 98, 103, 119, and 147.

Block and Survey District: XIV.; Lake.

Street:

Area: 6,421 acres 2 roods.

Valuation.

	£
Capital value	34,209
Unimproved value	22,340
Value of improvements	11,869

Particulars of Improvements.

Dwelling-houses.	Other Buildings.	Fencing.	Planting (except Orchards).	Permanent Draining (unexhausted only).		Clearing.	Laying down in Grass or Pasture.	All other Improvements.
				Covered.	Open.			
£ 2,815	£ 1,430	£ 2,794	£ 90	£ 302	£ 111	£ 2,205	£ 1,712	£ 410

JOHN MCGOWAN,
Valuer-General.

Wellington, 10th August, 1898.

An early example of an entry in a valuation roll. *AJHR*, 1898, B-17A, p.3.

which acted independently. Instead the Valuation Department, as it was known, had to work with the Land and Income Tax Department, with the Commissioner of Taxes acting as Valuer-General. John McGowan, the first Valuer-General, was appointed in November 1896. Six supervising valuers and 16 district valuers were employed in the following year.

A completely separate Valuation Department came into being in 1904. The department and Valuer-General acted independently from that time, except for a brief period in the mid-1920s when the department was amalgamated with the Stamp Duties and Land and Income Tax Departments.

The number of staff in the Valuation Department grew rapidly. In 1897, for instance, the department employed only two permanent cadets or clerks, in addition to the Valuer-General and valuers, although many other staff were employed temporarily. Eight cadets, including four women 'cadettes', were engaged by 1904. Three years later, the department had a permanent staff of 100. With the exception of the general public service lay-offs during the depression years of the 1920s and 1930s, the permanent staff remained at about 100 until after the Second World War. It has increased dramatically since then, and in 1993 over 400 permanent staff are employed.

Throughout the twentieth century, the system of land valuations has become standardised. A number of government Acts laid the basis for uniform valuations and established the mechanisms for property-owners to appeal decisions. Improved technology has made the recording of valuation information more efficient. The Bradma Electric and Hand Embossing Machines introduced in the 1950s and the computer systems employed from the 1960s have been important developments. Government valuers, too, have become more professional. Specialist courses began at the University of Auckland in the early 1940s. The Institute of Valuers, founded in 1939, achieved statutory recognition as an incorporated society in 1948 under the Valuers Act. The institute, and the Valuers' Registration Board provide the framework which governs the conduct and practice of all licensed valuers.

In 1988 the Valuation Department was renamed Valuation New Zealand. VNZ continues to be the single largest valuer in the country, making valuations of all properties every three years. Despite almost a century of change, the department's 1896 mandate of providing a full, efficient and impartial estimate of property values remains the same today.

CHAPTER 2

Pioneers of a Quiet Invasion, 1898-1921

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT in the Valuation Department begins in 1898, about 14 months after the establishment of the department itself, when women were engaged as cleaners.

JANE DANIELS

Jane Daniels began cleaning the Auckland offices of the department in January 1898. She was an experienced cleaner, having serviced the Auckland offices of the Land and Income Tax Department for a year before joining the Valuation Department. Although her salary was listed at £1 per month she was always paid a lesser, but varying amount; it seems likely that the department called upon her to clean the offices as the need arose. She received 11s 2d during her first month of employment, and 11s 3d the following month. Her services were scarcely called upon in March, when she received only 3s 5d. From April to June 1898, when her employment ceased, she received between five and six shillings. Beyond her employment record for a two-year period, little is known about her. By 1899 she may no longer have been in paid employment, as the electoral roll lists her occupation as 'home duties'.

Mrs Harper was also employed in January 1898 to clean the department's Christchurch offices. Unlike Jane Daniels, she was paid on a weekly rate, although her work was on a similar casual basis. Mrs Harper continued to clean the Christchurch branch for several years.

The cleaning staff remained the only women employed in the department until 1900, when the first female clerical officer was engaged. Ivy Hill began as a temporary officer in April 1900 at a rate of 15s per week. Edith O'Leary, also a temporary clerical officer, joined head office in Wellington in 1902. In common with other temporary clerks at the time, these two officers never became classified as permanent staff. When they left the department in December 1904 to join the Land and Income Tax Department, they were still classed as temporary.

IVY HILL

Ivy Hill holds an important place in the history of women in the Valuation Department, not only as the first female clerical officer, but also as the first woman valuer. She was born in 1881, and was about 19 years old when she began working in the New Plymouth office. During her time there she resided with her parents, Samuel and Caroline Hill. Although her father was a farmer at the time of her birth, he became a valuer for the area in 1898, and it is likely that he used his influence to obtain her position. In 1912 Ivy's brother Samuel was transferred from the Land and Income Tax Department to the Valuation Department.

Ivy was a temporary clerical officer for only four months. By July 1900 she was listed under the general heading 'District Valuer, etc', still receiving 15s a week. It is not clear whether she was, in fact, acting as a valuer at this stage. In August 1903, however, she was clearly classified as a valuer, with the title of 'temporary district valuer'.

Ivy's work as a valuer was short-lived. She was transferred to head office in Wellington as a clerical assistant in February 1904, and remained there until the end of the year. Because she was living away from home, she received a yearly lodging allowance of £2 3s 4d in addition to her base salary. For the remainder of the year, she worked for both the Valuation and the Land and Income Tax Departments. She was transferred to the latter at the end of 1904, and remained there until her resignation in 1910.

Ivy had no specific qualifications to fit her for the task of valuing land and most probably learned the process from her father and while on the job. There was in fact no formal system of training or official qualification at the time. In 1896, Alexander Hogg, member of the House of Representatives, believed that valuers had to be 'men of unimpeachable integrity, fearless

Cadettes appointed.

Valuation Department,
Wellington, 17th February, 1904.

HIS Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint

NORA SMYTHE,
GERTRUDE ETHEL DAVIDSON, and
MARGARET FLORA MCLEAN

to be cadettes in the Valuation Department, as from the 1st day of February, 1904; and

MARGARET JANE DRYSDALE

to be a cadette in the Valuation Department, as from the 15th day of February, 1904.

C. H. MILLS,
Minister in Charge of Valuation Department.

The official notification of the appointment of the first group of 'cadettes' in the Valuation Department in 1904. *New Zealand Gazette*, 1904, p.560.

in the discharge of their duties – men both educated and intelligent, trained to the work, with good observational powers, and, above everything else, men entirely above temptation'.[2] Ivy must have been able to satisfy all but the criterion of sex.

The department began to appoint women as cadets from the end of 1903. A cadetship in the public service was a highly sought-after position, leading to permanent administrative and clerical posts. Cadets, or 'cadettes' as the women were sometimes called, had usually passed the civil service entrance examinations, introduced in 1886. Women had begun to receive cadetships in the public service from 1874, when Kate Janisch became a cadet in the Telegraph Department in Wellington.[3] The Valuation Department's first cadet, Miss Robertson, was appointed to the Auckland office where she remained until transferred to the Advances to Settlers Office in June 1906.

The department employed four more women as cadets in February 1904. Nora Smythe was appointed to the Christchurch office, Gertrude

Davidson and Margaret McLean to head office, and Margaret Drysdale to the Dunedin office.

Unlike the earlier women employees, all four cadets had passed the junior civil service entrance examination. They were among the top 20 candidates for 1904: Nora Smythe was 15th on the list, Gertrude Davidson 16th equal, Margaret McLean 20th equal, and Margaret Drysdale, who was 18th equal in 1904, resat the examination the following year and scored the second highest mark. Margaret Drysdale and Nora Smythe later added the senior civil service examinations to their qualifications.

Other women appointed to the department in the early years also had good qualifications. Gertrude Florence Cooke, the next cadet, had a Bachelor of Arts degree and both civil service examinations. She was the only woman with a university degree to work in the department until 1955, when Miss Donnelly and Mrs Sherlock, both with Master of Arts degrees, were appointed as temporary clerks in Auckland.

GERTRUDE COOKE

Gertrude Cooke joined the Valuation Department after 18 months' employment as a cadette in the Land and Income Tax Department. She was born in 1883 in Kakahu, Geraldine, where her father Charles was a schoolmaster and her mother Alice taught sewing.

The family moved a number of times during Gertrude's youth and settled in Waipukurau where Charles became the schoolmaster in January 1892. Alice did not have a formal role in the school, but pupils later remembered her kindness if they were injured or taken ill, as well as the 'famous little cakes' she would give them. Known to his pupils, no doubt behind his back, as 'Captain Cooke', Charles was particularly interested in mathematics and chemistry, and several of his students, Gertrude among them, gained boarding scholarships to Napier schools.

Gertrude attended Napier Girls' High School and in 1899 was dux of the school. She joined in a range of activities while a student. At the first meeting of the school's debating society in 1899 she led the negative side to victory in a debate on the question of 'whether the side saddle should be abolished'.[4]

Gertrude sat and passed her university matriculation examination in December 1899, and was placed 385th on the list of candidates. Her

Gertrude Cooke (or possibly Edith O'Leary) worked in the Land and Income Tax Department before transferring to the Valuation Department in 1904. The Premier, Richard Seddon, is in the foreground of a photograph of the staff of the Land and Income Tax Department in 1902. Inland Revenue Department Library.

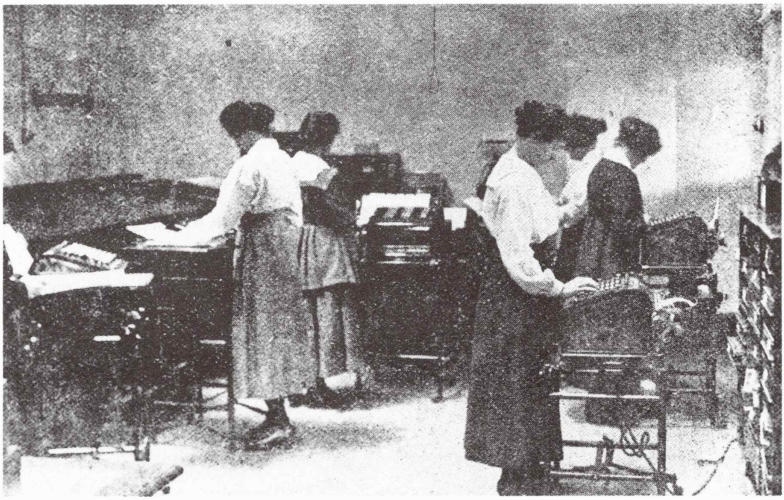
papers included Latin, Euclid, French, English, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geography, History and Biology. The large number of topics indicates some of the expectations of schools and the Education Department at that time, as well as her own ability. The emphasis on mathematical subjects may also reflect some of her father's influence.

Gertrude enrolled at Victoria College in 1901 and passed all but one of her courses. In the civil service entrance examinations in January 1902, she was placed 24th in the junior examination and gained a partial pass in the senior. She enrolled at Canterbury College for the 1902 academic year, but her appointment as a cadette in the Land and Income Tax Department seems to have temporarily halted her university study. She gained a complete pass in the senior civil service examination in Napier in January 1903.

Despite working full time, Gertrude continued her university studies at Victoria College from 1903. Like many other women who tried to combine paid work and education, she obviously found it difficult to balance the demands of each. She failed one of her four courses in 1904, and after failing terms for another in 1905, did not sit all of her exams. By this time she had been transferred to the Valuation Department, where she began work as a cadet at head office in February 1905. She continued to attend university, finally gaining her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1907. Gertrude remained with the department for almost 30 years, retiring in the 1930s.

Cadets performed a range of duties, and were trained in general clerical and secretarial work. These skills enabled them to be promoted to the clerical division of the public service, where their work would be primarily administrative. As clerks or clerical officers, they would also have prepared valuation rolls.

Instruction in shorthand and typing was included in a cadet's training, and until specialist typists were employed the cadets and clerks performed all the secretarial work. Most of this work would have been done by the male officers, however, as shorthand and typing were considered men's occupations until the early twentieth century. The first women typists were known as 'typistes' or 'lady typewriters' to differentiate them from the men.



Women were believed to be more dextrous than men, and so more suited to operating typewriters and other machines. Training women in this type of work also enabled men to move on to more 'important' duties. These women are at work in a corner of the machine room of the Public Trust Office, ca 1919. New Zealand collection, neg. 525, Canterbury Public Library. Original in *The Weekly Press*, 15 October 1919.

TYPISTS

The Valuation Department employed its first specialist woman typist in 1912. Rita Armstrong was 19 years old when she joined head office as a 'shorthand-writer and typist' at an annual salary of £84. She remained the only typist in the department until 1914, when Veronica McCarthy joined the Wellington staff and Maggie Johnson began in the Auckland office. By 1921 there were 25 typists and shorthand writers, the single largest women's occupational group in the department. They performed all the typing work by this time, as the cadets and clerks moved to clerical and administrative duties. Unlike other women officers who were employed only in the main centres, there were typists in most of the department's offices, including Te Kuiti and Invercargill.

Several of the women employed in this period remained with the department for many years. Margaret Drysdale and Nora Smythe both retired in 1934 after 30 years' service. Maggie Johnson joined the staff in 1914 when she was 17, and remained until her retirement in 1954 or 1955.

These women would have noticed many changes to the conditions of their work. A range of regulations, formal and informal, governed the

1899.

Junior Civil Service Examination

Number on list	Name	Department to which appointed
9	Gunn . Frances . E ✓	
10	Hunter W. F.	Justice
11	Miller J.	Justice
12	Tudehope A	Advances to Settlers
13	Donovan W	Declines appointment
14	Klee A	Justice
15	Wyman B. H	Justice
16	Brailsford J	Declines appointment
17	Mc. Intosh William	Customs
18	Moyle F. J.	Customs
19	Robertson James	Lands
20	Gaddy E. W. B.	Govt. Declines appointment
21	Kilburn Eva . B. ✓	
22	Goulding J. H.	Declines appointment
23	Phillips D. P.	Justice
24	Mc. Iver R. M.	Govt. Insurance
25	Mackay T. V.	Already in Service
26	Caro L. D.	Lands
27	Gaddy Ethel B. ✓	
28	Hislop W	Stamps
29	Overton Wm. B.	Stamps
30	Kerr Katherine K.	
31	Hendry J.	Govt. Insurance
32	Beck J.	Education

Women scored highly in the civil service entrance examinations, but this did not guarantee appointment as a cadet. Some government departments passed over women candidates in favour of men. IA1, 1907/624. Internal Affairs Files, National Archives of New Zealand, Wellington.

employment of women in the public service. During the 1880s and 1890s, the Post and Telegraph Department, for instance, employed women only in areas which were 'suitable for females'; women were not permitted to work at night, and had to resign upon marriage.[5] Regulations issued in 1898 stipulated that the appointment of all cadets had to be made in the order in which their names appeared in the examination results, although women would 'receive offers of appointment to such vacancies only as are suitable for girls'.[6] Those women who had scored well in the examinations were sometimes passed over as candidates for cadetships.

There was also hostility to women's employment, particularly as cadets. Some looked upon the 'modern development' of the 'girl clerk' as a 'quiet invasion', not altogether welcome.[7] This was evident at the highest official levels. In 1896, for instance, Secretary of Labour Edward Tregear noted with wry humour that 'Slowly and surely girls are escaping into the Civil Service'. In his opinion, 'the Eternal Female is becoming visible in our old domain'.[8] The Public Service Association (PSA) also viewed women's increasing participation in the public service with some disquiet, claiming in 1895 that 'Primarily the place of women is in the home'.[9]

Opportunities for women began to be more circumscribed from 1912, following the report of the Hunt Commission appointed to inquire into the public service. From 1913 all female officers were required to resign their positions upon marriage. Women's salaries were officially fixed at a level lower than men's; in the words of the commission, 'it would not do to rank them equally with males in the matter of salaries'. While women could be good, steady workers, they could not 'stand the strain of a rush or pressure of work in the same way that men can'. Female officers, the commission suggested, 'do not readily take responsibility in the same way that men do'.[10] Women were also excluded from the public service entrance examinations from 1913.

Other, less lucrative positions, however, were being opened to women. The Public Service Commissioner believed that women were most

Shorthand-writers and typists are required to pass a competitive examination in shorthand and typewriting. These examinations are conducted by an Examiner appointed by the Public Service Commissioner, and are held annually in various centres throughout New Zealand. There are five grades of examination, namely :—

Junior Entrance Examination with shorthand at the rate of eighty words a minute and typewriting at the rate of thirty words a minute, together with an English test.

Senior Entrance Examination, with shorthand at the rate of 110 words a minute and typewriting at the rate of forty words a minute, together with an English test.

Intermediate Examination with shorthand at the rate of 130 words a minute and typewriting at the rate of fifty words a minute, together with a test in confused manuscript.

Special Examination, with shorthand at the rate of 150 words a minu e and typewriting at the rate of fifty words a minute, together with a test in confused manuscript.

Shorthand Reporters' Examination, requiring a speed of from 150 to 180 words a minute in shorthand with not more than 1 per cent. of error in transcription.

While the first two are the entry examinations, the other three are mainly for promotion purposes.

In regard to (2)—*i.e.*, those requiring professional or technical qualifications—the usual practice is to invite applications, in some cases restricted to those already in the Service and in others open to persons not already public servants. Vacancies under this latter heading are notified in the public press, and comprise such positions

Shorthand and typing examinations were introduced in the public service in 1913. *AJHR*, 1933, H-14, p.4.

suited to clerical and secretarial tasks, and that they should be trained in office and machine work 'to allow the male staff to be engaged on work of a more important character'. In 1913 secretarial work was placed on a more professional basis with the introduction of examinations for shorthand-writers and typists.[11]

There would probably have been further restrictions on women's employment had the First World War not intervened. With the men away in the armed services, women assumed many positions in the public service, and the wartime requirements of departments such as Defence provided new employment opportunities. In recognition of the war situation, the public service entrance examinations were reopened to women from 1916.

The number of women employed in the public service in either permanent or temporary positions soared. The Public Service Commissioner recorded:

> that women are now satisfactorily performing work which Departments would have hesitated to entrust to them before the war. The

> zeal, diligence, and good conduct of the large number of women, of whom the greater proportion had no office experience before joining the Service, merits praise.[12]

Unlike other departments such as Defence, the Valuation Department employed few extra women during the war. It had no specific war duties and the need for additional staff was minimal. Only seven women were appointed between 1914 and 1918 – six typing staff and one relieving cadette, although several typists were engaged on a temporary basis.

The general increase of women in the public service became an issue after the war. Returned servicemen received preferential consideration for vacancies, and many who had been temporary officers were taken on permanently. The increased volume of administration also allowed departments to absorb temporary female officers. The Valuation Department employed a number of women from other departments; over half of those appointed during 1920 and 1921 had worked as relieving officers in various branches of the Department of Internal Affairs. Gladys Ruddle, for instance, joined the Dunedin office as a shorthand typist after working as a relieving typist in the local office of the Department of Internal Affairs. Others, such as Alfreda Coster, who joined the department as a temporary officer in 1916, had their positions made permanent from the end of the war.

Women continued to be appointed as cadets because of the shortage of young men applying. Janet Stewart, who joined head office in 1918, and Eileen Staff, who joined in 1920, were the first women to receive permanent cadetships in the Valuation Department since 1905. Laura Naughton had gained a cadetship to head office in 1917, but it was only a relieving position.

The Public Service Commissioner, however, was concerned about the employment of such women:

> Difficulties arise when it is necessary to promote women to positions in which they are required to train or control boys or men, to

> say nothing of the dislocation which arises through the very large wastage owing to the retirement of women to be married.

He warned that there would be far-reaching results if the promotion of young men was blocked by 'girls, who rarely expect to remain in the Service after about the age of twenty-five'.[13]

The medical officer of the public service articulated some of these 'far-reaching results' in her report in 1920. Dr Daisy Platts-Mills voiced a common anxiety when she argued that the employment of women was leading them to abandon their domestic skills. Young women were, she reminded all departments, 'the potential wives and mothers of the future, and our endeavour must be to build up in them the physique and the mentality which will best fit them for the great responsibility which is to rest upon them'. She suggested that departments introduce practical home-making classes which young women could attend for two hours every week, as well as 'daily healthful exercise during spare time on tennis and fives courts, and in gymnasia'.[14]

There is no evidence that departments such as Valuation introduced any of Dr Platts-Mills' suggestions. By the early 1920s it was clear that the opportunities for women's employment which the war had created were diminishing. Economic recession, as well as fears that the working woman was endangering the future of the nation by losing her maternal and domestic skills, made the future employment of women in the public service uncertain. The period of expanding opportunities for women was over as the public service restricted the employment of women and their conditions of work.

CHAPTER 2

'Deprived of Permanent Status', 1921-1946

THIS WAS A PERIOD OF CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES for women in the Valuation Department. The number of women employed on a permanent basis fell from 33 in 1921 to none in 1946. No women were appointed to permanent positions, although a number were taken on as temporary workers on a casual, part-time basis. With the economy in recession in the 1920s and then depression in the 1930s, the wages and working conditions of all public service employees declined. The establishment of the welfare state and the Second World War, however, created a new demand for women's services.

The economic boom which New Zealand experienced after the First World War came to an end in 1921. Needing to cut expenditure, the Public Service Commissioner introduced a policy of retrenchment. Women officers were among the first to be affected. The commissioner recommended that surplus staff be dispensed with, beginning with temporary officers, many of whom were women retained after the war. He also suggested the dismissal of all permanent female officers doing work which men could, in his view, just as easily perform. Only after these two groups had been removed would inefficient officers be laid off.

Women found it difficult to obtain permanent employment in the public service in this climate. Indeed from 1921 there were no further appointments of women as cadets, and all typing and shorthand staff were engaged on a temporary basis, although working full-time. A special classification of 'temporary office assistant' was created for the new positions. Many women found themselves 'deprived of permanent status'[15] as temporary, full-time employees, with neither opportunity for promotion nor job security.

Wages were also reduced. All public servants experienced two pay cuts in 1922. A belief that women engaged in clerical work were not as 'serviceable' or as adaptable as their male colleagues led the commission to impose a further pay restriction on women: regardless of their ability or length of service, they could not earn more than £350 per annum. Male officers, performing similar work, but with less experience, were automatically assigned higher wages.

The depression of the 1930s imposed further strains on public service staff. All salaries were lowered in 1931 and 1932, and were not restored fully until 1936. Many women lost their positions as the number of permanent and temporary staff, both full-time and casual, was reduced.

In the Valuation Department the number of women employed and the classification of their occupations changed rapidly after 1921. The 22 women working in the department in 1920 were all permanent staff engaged on a full-time basis. By the end of the following year, fewer than ten of the 33 women employed were permanent, as all office assistants and secretarial staff had their positions made temporary.

Within months of the commission's directives in 1921, six women resigned, or were dismissed or transferred from the department. Some were only very recent additions to the staff. Dorothy Smith, Doris McKay and Vera Webber, for instance, were secretarial staff appointed in 1920 and 1921, but left the department in 1922 after their positions had been made temporary. Emily Rendall, who had passed the junior public service examination and

Maggie Johnson (photographed in 1949) began work in the Auckland office of the Valuation Department in 1914 as a shorthand writer and typist. She remained there until her retirement in 1954 or 1955. VNZ collection.

been appointed as a shorthand typist in the Invercargill office in 1921, found her appointment annulled just a few months after she took it up.

Less than half the 33 female staff employed in the department in 1921 remained in 1928. By the time the Labour government came to power in 1935 and began creating new jobs in the public service, the number of women in the department had fallen to seven. All had been temporary staff for over 14 years.

Yet opportunities expanded for women engaged on a more casual basis. In 1926, for example, 18 women were in full-time positions, but another 21 were casual typists. The trend continued into the next decade. In addition to the seven full-time women left in 1935 there were a further 18 casual officers called in as the need for extra labour arose, or to do the work of women whose services had been dispensed with.

The nature of the women's work also changed over this period, as female clerks and cadets were removed or retired. The department followed the official policy of creating a class of temporary office assistant. Miss McAlister became the office assistant at head office in 1921, after being engaged as a shorthand typist the previous year. Jessie Clarke, specially appointed as an office assistant, assumed her duties in Auckland at the end of 1920. The five women working as office assistants by 1926 had all been previously employed in the department as secretarial staff on a permanent full-time basis.

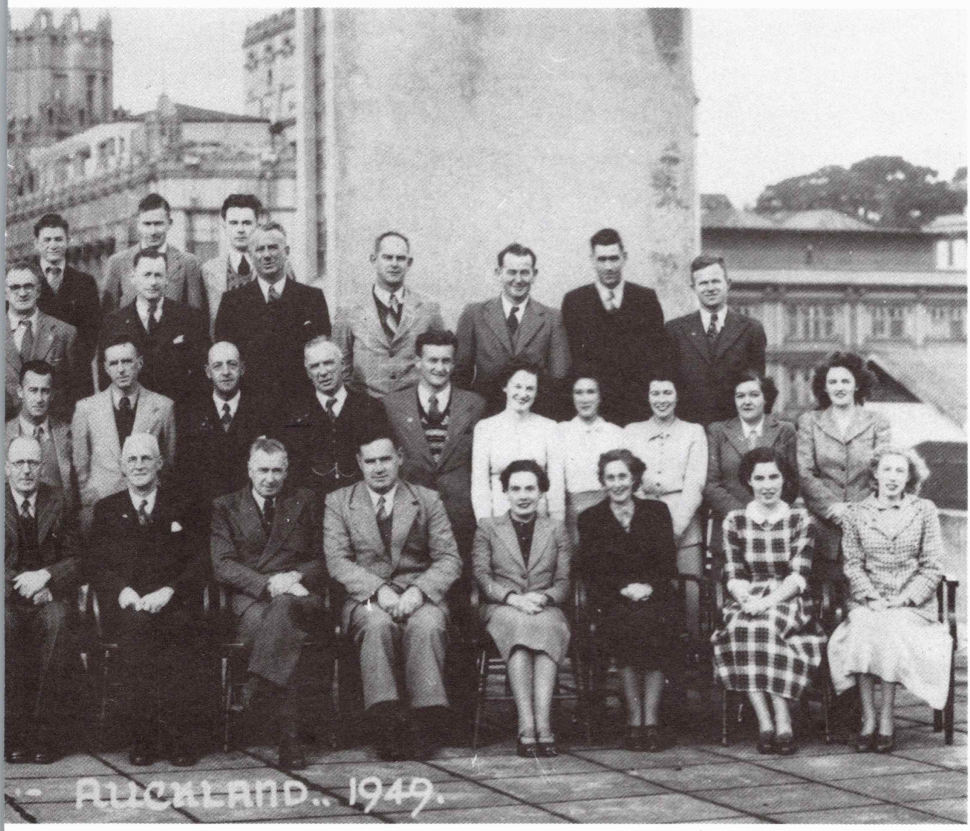
It is likely that these office assistants performed the same work as women earlier engaged as cadets or clerks. Some, for instance, traced maps for valuation purposes. Fewer secretarial and clerical staff must have created extra work for the women still employed, although one male officer recollected that the typists 'had very little to do except when some revision came in for typing....The typists were...able to spend a lot of time knitting and I was amply supplied in jerseys!'[16] These women may well have been engaged on a casual basis, working only when the department had specific tasks to complete.

Opportunities for women in the Valuation Department expanded considerably following the Second World War and changes to the public service regulations. There were no women employed on a permanent basis in the Auckland office in 1946; by 1949, when this photograph was taken, there were 20. VNZ collection.

The women also experienced the general decline in wages. The changing fortunes of the first group of 'cadettes' illustrate this well.

DEPRESSION CUTS

Nora Smythe, Margaret Drysdale and Gertrude Cooke remained with the department as clerks during the 1920s and into the 1930s. During this time, however, their wages dropped dramatically. Gertrude Cooke and Nora Smythe both received the highest possible salary for women in the public service when it was set at £350 in 1921 (Margaret Drysdale was earning slightly less at £320). By the early 1930s, they were each receiving £271.



From 1935 the welfare state created a large number of new administrative positions in the public service. The total number of permanent staff, all men, grew by 22 percent between 1935 and 1937, while temporary staff, including women, increased by 109 percent. The expansion continued during the Second World War. The enlistment of men created new opportunities for women and the number employed in the public service grew steadily over the war years. From a total of 2013 female staff in April 1939, the number leapt to over 7000, mainly temporary workers, by April 1944.[17]

The shortage of public service cadets in 1940 led the commission to ask departments to consider appointing young women as an emergency measure. The commission's report of the following year acknowledged the role played by female cadets and indeed all women appointed to the public service for the duration of the war:

> Generally speaking, it can be said that the appointees are doing a wonderful work, and from the war-effort point of view their response is a very worthy one as they have without doubt assisted in the release of many male employees at present overseas.[18]

The increased employment of women was not without its critics. Some feared that women were neglecting their household duties; others complained when women had to take time off work to attend to such duties. The commission, aware of the difficulties under which some women worked, countered the comments about 'female absenteeism': 'it must not be overlooked that wartime appointees are invariably older, have family responsibilities, and in many cases are working under considerable strain owing to the absence of husbands overseas'.[19]

The work of the Valuation Department did not increase markedly because it was not directly connected to the war effort. It continued to engage women as casual typists but the numbers differed little from the pre-war years. Thirty-two casual typists were employed in 1937, 30 in 1939, 27 in 1940 and only 19 in 1945. The opportunities for office assistants blossomed, and by 1945 19 women were employed in the position. Some of these women were clearly performing the work previously done by men who had enlisted. Many years later, a male officer remembered that 'some young girls' had provided assistance in preparing valuation rolls in the Dunedin office.[20]

The new types of work stood women in good stead for the opportunities which developed immediately after the war. Acute staffing shortages prompted the Public Service Commission to make permanent all temporary shorthand typists and typists with the necessary qualifications. Between

1946 and 1948 most temporary staff, many of them women, were given employment on a permanent basis, reversing the 1921 ban.

Two other changes also enabled women to regain lost employment opportunities. The 1913 prohibition on employing married women was lifted permanently from 1947. In the same year women again became eligible to receive cadetships. After a period of nearly 30 years, women were entitled once more to employment in the clerical division of the public service. For women in the Valuation Department engaged on a temporary basis, these changes ushered in a period of unprecedented opportunities.

CHAPTER 4

A New Era, 1947-1972

NINETEEN FORTY-SEVEN marked the beginning of a new era for women in the Valuation Department in many ways. As a percentage of all permanent employees, women increased from zero in 1946 to over 38 percent in 1949-50. The post-war level was not maintained, however, and by 1969-70 it had dropped to about 25 percent.

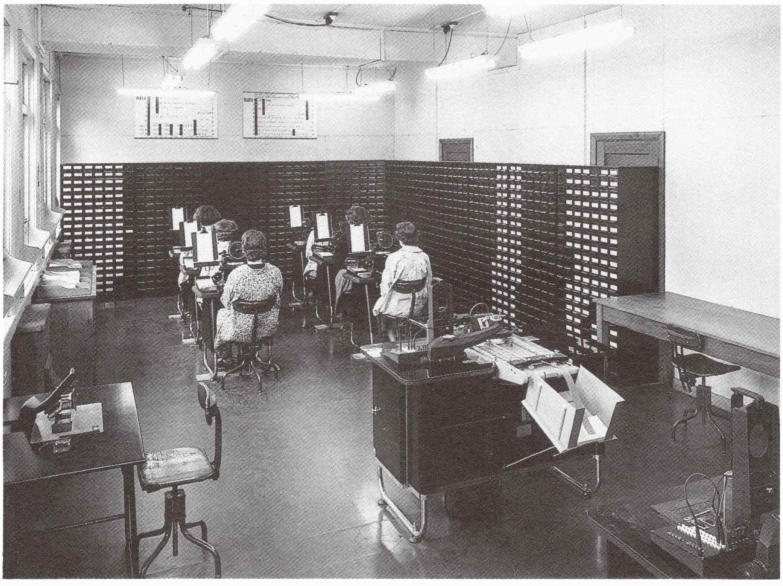
The department employed over 100 full-time staff in 1946, but only three were women, all classed as temporary workers. Of these, Maggie Johnson had the longest service record, having been appointed in 1914. Olive Willis was transferred to the department in 1920 from the Department of Internal Affairs, where she worked in a temporary capacity. Both women had their initial position as shorthand typist transformed into the post of temporary office assistant in 1926. Elsie Milburn, however, had retained her original position as shorthand typist, which she took up in the Invercargill office in 1921.

That 1946 figure of three full-time female staff was a low point. In the following year, the department had taken advantage of the Public Service Commission's decision to transfer temporary workers to the permanent roll, and appointed 11 shorthand typists. Some of these women had probably been former temporary, part-time employees. The Christchurch

Women began to be appointed officially as draughting assistants in 1947. Two years later they were given the title of 'draughtswomen' because of the growing number of women performing the work. VNZ collection.

office, for instance, had had no full-time female staff since Gladys Ruddle left in 1945, and she had been the only full-time woman there since Nora Smythe's retirement 11 years earlier. Such a large office would have had to employ several temporary officers simply to complete all the necessary secretarial work. In addition to the shorthand typists, the department also appointed 31 women to temporary positions which were made permanent in 1948.

Not only were once temporary positions made permanent, but new and revived employment opportunities emerged. Also in 1947, the department engaged five women as clerks and over 20 as clerical assistants – the first since Edith O'Leary joined the staff in 1902. Miss Annan also became the first woman appointed to the department as a cadet since Eileen Staff was taken on in 1920.



Working conditions could be very formal in the 1950s. These women are operating Bradma Electric and Hand Embossing Machines, possibly in the Wellington branch of the Valuation Department. VNZ collection.

A completely new employment area opened up when nine women were appointed as draughting assistants in 1947; within two years their title had been changed to draughtswomen. No doubt women had been performing draughting work in some form for years, particularly during the Second World War.

The early 1950s saw major technological developments within the department. One in particular had a significant effect on women's employment: the Bradma Electric and Hand Embossing Machines (or Adrema machines, as they were also known), introduced from 1952. The department established machine centres in the Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch offices to process information for the entire country.

Previously all information on property records had been typed which meant considerable repetitive work for the typists whenever valuation rolls were revised or new information added to existing records. The Bradma

system overcame the need for extensive retyping. Details of each property were recorded on two metal plates.

What you did was actually punch information on little tin plates. All the information was to do with valuations – people's names, and who owned this piece of land, and describing the land and everything. And then we used to print them, although it wasn't really our job to do the actual printing. That part of the job was for the men. (Bradma operator, 1950s-60s)

Once the material had been embossed on the plates, adding new information and providing copies of the details was a relatively simple matter: 'You could blot out mistakes by backtracking and put in what you wanted to.' Henceforth the information required for new revisions could be produced quickly, and the valuation rolls and other material kept up to date.

The machines were operated solely by women and it was clearly regarded as 'women's work': 'Oh yes – there were no males, but we had a male supervisor.' The Maori women who operated the machines in the Auckland office from the late 1950s achieved a degree of local and departmental fame. In 1962 the *New Zealand Herald* featured a photograph of the group which had come together slowly over the mid-1950s, through networks of friendship and kin.

When I first started Iri Koopu and Maryann Marino were there. Not long after I started Iri got her niece Heke a job, and I brought Parla, my sister, in. Not long after that we got Ramari Waenga.... We all became really firm friends. We used to play basketball, netball, everything together.... We used to have a table-tennis table in the office. We used to be really good at playing table-tennis then.... Quite a few times we would beat the valuation cadets. We used to play doubles and singles. (Bradma operator, 1950s-60s)

The location of the office also enabled the women to enjoy other activities together, and to shop and pay bills during their lunch-hour. One recalled the group's frequent trips to the nearby fish and chip shop to buy their morning tea. 'We weren't far from the town hall, and when the Beatles

SPECIAL APTITUDE

All-Maori Team Working On Valuation Rolls

The six girls employed by the Auckland Valuation Department to carry out the exacting work of preparing valuation rolls for the top part of the North Island are all Maoris.

They came together partly by chance and partly by intention.

When the machine room, where the work is done, was first opened in 1953, only one of the three girls then employed was a Maori.

As the staff changed and grew in number, it was found that more and more Maori girls were applying for jobs and winning them in competition with Europeans.

The department found that the Maori girls did an excellent job and seemed specially adapted to the work, and began to look out for suitable Maori recruits. Finally the stage was reached when all the staff were Maoris.

Providing that Maori girls with suitable qualifications, which include at least three years' secondary education, continue to come forward, it is likely to remain this way.

Proved Capable

Mr J. Wagstaff, the Auckland branch manager of the department, said he gave preference to Maoris girls when employing staff for this job because they had proved themselves so capable.

His present team would compare very favourably with machinists in any similar establishment anywhere in New Zealand.

The girls' supervisor, Mr J. Green, and the assistant branch manager, Mr H. L. Hawken, enthusiastically endorsed this statement.

Mr Wagstaff said that he could not explain satisfactorily why Maori girls had proved so successful at this type of work. There was much necessary noise in the machine room and it could be that the Maori temperament was more adaptable to this.

The girls were efficient, hardworking and punctual and they took a pride in their work. They also stuck with the job.

The divisional machinist, Miss Iri Koopu, and Miss Maryann Marino started in January, 1955. Mrs Keere Rapihana, joined the staff in March, 1955.

Misses Heke Stainton and Parla Walters both joined in 1956.

The newest recruit is Miss Ramari Waenga, who joined last year.

Like Their Work

Part of the responsibility for there being an all-Maori staff in the machine room must rest with the girls themselves. Most of them like the job so well that they persuade their friends and relatives to apply.

Mrs Rapihana and Miss Walters, sisters of the Northland fullback, M. W. Walters, are the second pair of sisters to be employed. Miss Stainton is a niece of Miss Koopu.

The girls' reasons for staying with the job could be summed up as "good work, good money and good company."

Perhaps not all the girls are quite as enthusiastic as Miss Marino, who after seven years still likes "everything" about the job, but they would agree with Miss Walters when she said: "We are all friends in the machine room, both in office hours and out of them."

(Left and above right) Keere Rapihana, a member of the 'All-Maori Team' of Bradma operators, still works for VNZ. *New Zealand Herald.*

Preparing statements in the Land Valuation Department. From left: Mr J. Green (supervisor), Misses P. Walters (seated at machine), M. Marino, Mrs K. Rapihana, Misses I. Koopu, R. Waenga, H. Stainton.

came here...we asked the boss if we could go, and we crossed the road and had a good view of them.'

Few Pakeha women worked in the machine room at the Auckland office after the mid-1950s.

There were Pakeha women working in the machine room when I first started, and they were really nice. But after we started, I can't remember any other Pakeha girls coming in although there were a few Island girls....Maybe the bosses just went out of their way to get Maori women in.

One of these Pakeha women recalled the speed and efficiency of her co-workers: 'I had about nine months in the machine room....I'm afraid I couldn't keep up with the Maori girls...although they said I did keep up.'

Despite the publicity and the reputation of the group among other machine operators, one of its members does not consider that it was anything special: 'I don't know about the famous bit....No, we didn't feel special. We thought we were just ordinary. If the others knew that there was

Running the Bradma machines was 'messy work', and women were supplied with gloves and a uniform. VNZ collection.

anything special being made about it now, they'd be the first to say, "Oh, what?! After all these years?"'

Bradma operators had mixed feelings about their experience with the machines. 'Lots of fun, but it was hard work....Yes, I was happy to leave the machine room. I *really* didn't like it that much'. Others found it a challenge, and enjoyed the work. 'Yes, it was something different, and at that time it was something new....We all tried to get faster and faster and faster, and worked out ways that we could get faster.' But even women who took pleasure in the work were relieved to see the demise of the machines. 'I wasn't sorry to see the machines go....It was messy work doing the printing. Perhaps that's why we had to wear uniforms then.'

The machines were gradually phased out from the mid-1960s and replaced with computers. The transition did not run smoothly in all offices. The Auckland office, for instance, became computerised later than the others, causing difficulties for the women who had to complete the valuation rolls:

'There were no males, but we had a male supervisor.' Operating the Bradma machines was regarded as women's work. VNZ collection.

After the machines all the girls went to the clerical section. It was all writing instead of doing machine work. Before the computers started we used to have to write everything out on forms and send them down to Wellington, and they used to do it on computers. And they did this for a while before we actually got computers for us to do it in our own offices. We used to have all these batches of printed stuff in the mail every day. If there were mistakes it used to take longer to get them right. We would have to write them all out on these different forms, and batch them up and send them down to Wellington....And then when we first got the computers it was quite easy for the ones who had used those machines. It was quite easy to change over to another type of machine. (Bradma operator, 1950s-60s)

Some negative attitudes to women's employment still lingered in the public service, despite the growing opportunities for women in departments such as Valuation. In 1953 and 1954, for instance, the public service conducted a survey of all government department's policies on hiring women. Some departments were forthright in their criticisms of women staff, arguing that women lacked the training and motivation for advancement. Women, it was alleged, shied away from positions of responsibility. They were seen as too nervous, too temperamental, and too fussy about office

The arrangement of some machine rooms, such as this one, possibly in the Christchurch office of the Valuation Department, had become more relaxed by the 1960s. VNZ collection.

conditions. Several departments claimed that women were suitable for only certain types of routine, repetitive work.

Valuation, however, took a more positive attitude towards its women staff. It responded favourably to the suggestion that the salaries of women and men be arranged on an equal basis. The department also agreed that in some cases women should be allowed to compete for more senior clerical positions. It recognised that women were disadvantaged when it came to being promoted above particular classes of the public service, but believed that they should not be promoted over men beyond that level. To justify not employing women in all aspects of its work, the department explained that there were certain types of work which women could not do, such as lifting heavy valuation registers.[21]

Even so, working conditions in the 1950s and 1960s were very structured:

Women continued to perform all work with the Bradma machines in the 1960s. VNZ collection.

It was all very formal in those days. You knew people as Mr and Mrs. The branch manager, who was in charge of the clerical part of it, always had his door closed. If you ever appeared in his office it was usually over a problem. They all dressed very formally.... There was a 'them and us' attitude, because we were segregated. There weren't valuers in among the clerical staff – you had your section and you stuck in that. You didn't have a valuer with you. Now we have valuers and everyone is intermingled. (Bradma operator in 1950s, clerical officer in 1960s, valuation officer from 1980s)

Equal pay became an issue for women in the Valuation Department and the wider public service from the 1950s. Not only was women's pay lower than men's, but other barriers hindered their promotion: their salary ceilings were below men's, they were concentrated in the lower paid classes, and were unlikely to be promoted to positions of authority over men.

The campaign for equal pay within the department was conducted mainly in Wellington, although individual women in other offices supported the action.

The only thing that used to get up my nose was the fact that they were employing males, and they were being paid more, yet they didn't know anything. They came in off the streets and here I was expected to train them, although I was happy to part with my knowledge. It was pre-equal pay. And the movement was getting quite strong within the department for that to happen. I was really pleased when it finally occurred. The funny thing was that I was nearly up to equal pay anyway, and I was given an extra $60 a year.... There weren't enough women grouped together in the Auckland office, so there wasn't a strong movement in our office, but I believe there was in Wellington.... We didn't have any marches and things like that. Oh yes, it made a difference to the work. It put you on an equal footing. It made everyone feel their worth, as though you were contributing, that at long last your worth was being noticed. Before you always felt that you weren't being rewarded for what you were doing. The females were the poor relations in the department. (Clerical officer, 1960s)

Equal pay for women in the public service came into effect from mid-1961. For some women in the Valuation Department, it was a milestone in their work experience: 'It was a great day when equal pay came in.' Others felt that it did not affect their employment because of the type of work they were doing. One officer who operated the Adrema machines remembered: 'No, I wasn't involved in getting equal pay. I didn't notice any change, but I may have done if I was in another area in the department.'

According to officers in some departments, equal pay could lead to unfriendliness from colleagues. One woman recalled: 'There was still incredible hostility: the patronising, semi-humorous put-down that's very hard to cope with. Many women were made to feel uncomfortable in their offices by their fellow workers.'[22] The notes for one male senior public servant's speech in 1967 illustrate this. Asked to sketch some of the changes for women in the public service between 1960 and 1967, he suggested 'a law which could be expressed something along these lines: "The height to which women scale in the Public Service is directly related to the height to which their skirts scale above their knees".'[23]

CHAPTER 5

'A Good Career for Women', 1973-

WOMEN'S POSITION IN THE DEPARTMENT has changed markedly over the last 20 years. Not only have women entered all aspects of its work, including valuing, but they have risen to senior positions within the administration. Official advocacy of equal employment opportunities (EEO) have also begun to affect women's employment, as VNZ has sought to enhance the opportunities for women in the department.

One of the most important developments has been the emergence of new career opportunities. In particular, women have taken up positions as valuers as increasing numbers have completed the specialist university courses. An officer who returned to the department in 1980 after a break of several years thought the transformation was remarkable. When she was employed as a clerical officer in the 1950s and 1960s, all the valuers were male:

It was a great surprise to me when I returned to the office in 1980, and it was wonderful to find all these young female valuation cadets coming through....It was just unheard of, a woman valuer. We never even thought it could happen, as it was a male-dominated occupation....It was never ever envisaged that any female from the office could become a valuer....Females in valuing! It was such

a huge change that had happened in those years I had been away. (Clerical officer in 1950s and 1960s, valuation officer from 1980)

She is now a valuation officer herself, a position which involves both clerical duties and property valuation.

In mid-1973, Judy Lenart was appointed as an assistant valuer, stationed in Wellington. She was the first woman to gain such a position since Ivy Hill acted as a temporary district valuer in 1903. Lenart's appointment heralded women's entry to the valuing profession. Two women were made urban field cadets in the following year, and by 1977 nine women were classed as valuation cadets. It was also in 1977 that Carole Wharfe was listed as a valuer, the first woman to hold such a position on a permanent basis. Nine years later, in 1986, Elizabeth Carruthers and Gail Smits became the first women promoted to the position of senior valuer. Jeanette Haszard (now Eskildsen) was the first, and so far the only, woman to become a managing district valuer when she was promoted to head the Henderson office in 1989.

The number of women valuation cadets, valuers and valuation officers has increased steadily since the early 1970s. By 1983, ten years after Lenart's appointment, the department employed more than 60 women in some valuing capacity. In 1993 VNZ employs 47 women and 106 men in the valuing area. Almost all of the women are urban valuers; there have been very few women involved in rural valuation. One of the two women currently employed as a rural valuer attributes the imbalance to the way the rural valuation qualification was gained:

I understand that prior to approximately 1970 most of the jobs were given to rural field cadets who had to complete a number of years farming prior to commencing study. The training was completed on the job with qualifications being gained through correspondence study. At that time attitudes were more traditional with regard to women working on farms – particularly when they were required to live on the job. (Rural valuer, 1988-)

Even during her own professional training in the 1980s women made up only 10 percent of the class.

Women entered the valuing professions for a variety of reasons, but the desire to be outdoors was prominent:

I hadn't always wanted to be a valuer. But I did know that I didn't want to be in a job where I would be stuck in an office all day every day. I wanted to be doing something where I could get outside....I found out about valuation because my mother worked as a typist for the department. I went out with one of the women valuers one day and saw what she did and thought it would probably be a very good idea. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

I went to see a careers guidance counsellor at school....I'd identified my skills as monetary and accounting things, but having come from a farming background I was also really keen not to be always tied up inside an office. I wanted to opt for something that had a mix, and valuation was a career that offered that. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

Several of the women recalled their first day on the job or first major valuation as a daunting, but satisfying experience:

Oh, my first day was an absolute disaster. Three awful things happened to me. I came back and told the DV, 'I'm never, ever going to be able to do this job'. The first thing was, I knocked on the front door of a house and I heard this scampering of feet. And around the side of the house came this dog, but he was as scared of me as I was of him, so that wasn't so bad....At the next place, the fellow more or less told me that I should leave the property. Then I went back to get in the car, and found that I'd locked the keys in....And then when I was driving home a car in front of me backed into my car, and I had a little bit of a ding. By the time I got back to the office I was an absolute wreck. That was my first day valuing. But from then on everything has gone fairly smoothly. (Valuation officer, 1980-)

The experiences of women valuers vary markedly, depending on their age, area, and when they began work. Women in rural areas could face unusual situations. One rural valuer recalled her experiences valuing *sheep and beef farms, dairy farms, lifestyle blocks, marijuana farms and communes. The latter two types of property often provided a talking point at the*

motel after work – it is difficult to know where to look when discussing a property with a naked man painting the roof of a house. (Rural valuer, 1988-)

Safety on the job is an issue which many women valuers have faced at some stage. 'I've been in a situation where I've felt very uneasy, and this is probably being a woman doing the job rather than a man....But as a woman going into people's houses, you do put yourself at risk to a certain extent.'

For rural valuers, visiting an isolated or questionable area alone can be an issue.

The only times I was concerned for my safety was when I had to value a road which is known as the seed-bed of the local crime industry, as it is the centre of the marijuana growing area. These inspections were done during the harvesting and drying season....On one occasion I did take a male valuer with me for safety reasons but he was more scared (cautious?) than I was. (Rural valuer, 1988-)

Dogs, however, are more of a problem.

I very rarely have any problems dealing with any members of the public. Our worst problem is the dogs that people have. But then we've had training on how to deal with nasty dogs and how to identify what the dog is actually going to do, which was very very enlightening. And well worth the money they had spent on that training, as far as I was concerned! (Valuation officer, 1980-)

As valuers and valuation officers, the women have experienced mixed reactions from clients, but most of them emphasise that attitudes have been supportive.

People are most impressed when they see a female valuer. Most people are really pleased....The people that are at home are the females of the partnership in a lot of cases, and you're much less threatening than a male, quite often. (Valuation officer, 1980-)

People would be surprised to see you because they'd expect a man. They'd hear the word 'valuer' and envisage a male doing the job....In fact, a lot of people think it's good, that it's nice to see a woman doing the job. I've never had any negative feedback, although I think some women have. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

I always got, 'How long have you been with the department?' They took one look at me and decided that I was just too young, sometimes commenting about the fact that I was a woman, but often quite interested. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

Similar responses could be encountered in rural areas:

Of course there was the odd comment asking if I was just gathering data for the (obviously male) valuer to interpret, and the odd query on my qualifications....I called on a farmer to discuss his valuation but as soon as I said who I was and what I wanted I was ordered off the property as he was only prepared to discuss his valuation with a man – and the boss man at that. My District Valuer completed the [job] but did manage to extract an apology from the farmer for his rudeness. (Rural valuer, 1988-)

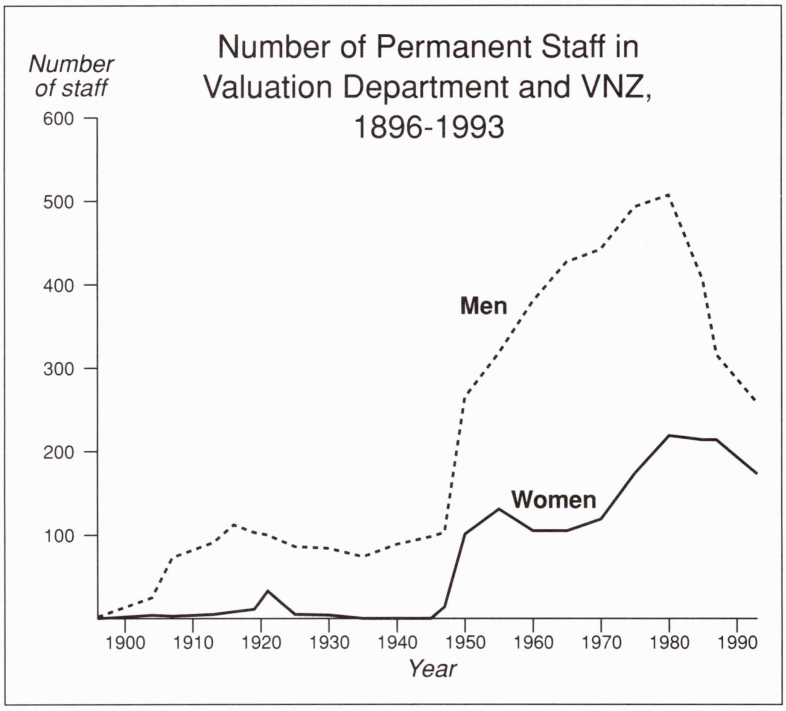
Male colleagues too have been supportive, both at university and on the job.

I did not experience many hassles from the guys in my class – apart from when I gained higher marks than them in the traditional male subjects. (Rural valuer, 1988-)

The older ones, in a way, found it more difficult adjusting to having a woman working with them, especially a youngster. They would take one look at me, and the language would be automatically curbed whenever I was around....By and large, there was a slight novelty value, but they were really very welcoming. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

When I started here there were valuer's assistants, and they were marvellous guys. They were so good to me. I felt that I came into a nice situation here. (Valuation officer, 1980-)

An equally important form of support for valuers is provided by partners and spouses, and in their roles as wives, mothers or partners, women make a major contribution. An occupation such as valuing can involve considerable travel, and some valuers may be away from home for most of the working week. Some male valuers recall revisions which required them to remain away from home for one or two weeks at a time: 'We had to



The number of women employed on a permanent basis in the Valuation Department and VNZ has changed markedly over the last century. *New Zealand Gazette*, 1896-1988; VNZ files.

travel over [to Nelson from Wellington] on Saturday nights on the "Matangi" or "Arahura" and come back the following Friday or a week later.'[24]

Increasing numbers of women have become valuers, but there are relatively few at the senior levels, reflecting, in part, women's 'late' entry into the valuing profession. That some women have reached senior valuing positions, such as managing district valuer, indicates the opportunities VNZ has provided for its women staff. This is particularly evident at the managerial level where three of the 11 managers in 1993 are women, one of whom is a second-tier manager. Two of the women managers work on a part-time basis, illustrating the flexible working conditions VNZ, under its current Valuer-General, Hamish McDonald, has been prepared to provide to senior women officers.

Women in such positions feel a responsibility to other women in the department.

I do sometimes feel as a role model for other women, and that's sometimes a heavy responsibility. I expect a lot from myself in that role.... Women lack assertiveness in applying for jobs, and in considering that they have adequate skills. I just hope that by being here and showing that it can be done, that some of them might think it's possible and reach out to that and go for it themselves. I really try and encourage other women. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

A desire to 'reach out' to other women valuers and establish women's networks led to the inaugural Women Valuers' Conference in 1989, which 34 women valuers attended. The aims of this conference went beyond networking to cover other issues of importance to women valuers: to increase the organisational knowledge and interpersonal skills of women valuers; and to identify areas of support and training to enable women to reach senior positions in VNZ. 'The conferences have been very good in making networks....You know people because you've seen them at the women's conferences.'

The conferences have enabled women officers and VNZ to become aware of some of the discrepancies between the career paths of women and men valuers, and to work towards addressing and overcoming these. Simply gathering the women together has also been seen as significant.

Having a women's conference enables women to get together and share the way they deal with things....It was good to have everyone collected together, as we're still a minority within the department. It's quite refreshing to have a concentration of women in one spot. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

VNZ has now established Women's Conferences in addition to the Women Valuers' Conference to enable women from all areas of the department to meet and discuss issues of importance. It is a move which the women have welcomed.

It was very significant and very important that we moved across the occupational thing and said 'Let's be women together', and I think that's really good. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

The conferences are a wonderful opportunity to meet all the women. This was women – *it wasn't clerical women or valuing women. It was women in the department, and we had an enjoyable time of getting to know each other. This is getting us closer together....The combined conferences are well, well overdue.* (Valuation officer, 1980-)

The combined conferences exemplify the range of occupations in which women work in VNZ. In 1993, the 173 women in the department comprise 40 percent of the total staff. The majority of them (126 or 73 percent) are employed in the administrative and clerical support sections, which they have dominated since the Second World War.

EEO initiatives have been designed to address the position of women, and other disadvantaged groups, within VNZ and other government organisations. VNZ introduced a monthly EEO newsletter in 1989 as a means of promoting the initiatives and developing the department's own policies. These include various hui and the organisation of the Women's Conferences. The department was also involved in establishing a pilot child-care programme in 1989.

EEO has definitely improved women's position within the department. I think that it has made us all so much aware of each other – male and female – and of our worth. I just don't realise how much [it has affected women's employment], but all of a sudden it hits me, and I think 'Yes'. You just become your own person somehow. You feel as though what you're putting across is important. The reinforcement is good. (Valuation officer, 1980-)

Women employed in all facets of the department's work believe that the changes of the last 40 years have been beneficial to women as individuals and as a group.

It's just more accepted as a matter of course now that women should be in the workplace, particularly in the valuing sphere, and looking ahead it's going to become increasingly that way in all the possible positions that are open to women. (Urban valuer, 1983-)

Yes, there have been many changes....I think it is better for women now than

when I first started [in 1953]. (Currently senior roll clerk, previously a Bradma operator in 1950s and 1960s)

There have been enormous *changes between 1954 and 1993 that have definitely improved women's position. Well, equal opportunities have been the major improvement. That covers everything really. Equal opportunities, that means equal wages, to be able to do the same things as others.* (Currently valuation officer, previously a Bradma operator in 1950s and clerical officer in 1960s)

Equal employment opportunities became an issue in the 1980s. Valuation New Zealand appointed its first EEO officer and began an EEO newsletter in 1989. *EEO newsletter*, VNZ, January 1989.

A Women's Chronology of the Valuation Department and Valuation New Zealand

1896 Valuation Department established.

1898 First women employed: Jane Daniels, office cleaner at Auckland and Mrs M. Harper, office cleaner in Christchurch.

1900 Ivy Hill engaged as a temporary officer, the first temporary woman employee.

1903 Ivy Hill becomes the first woman to work as a valuer when she is appointed temporary district valuer in New Plymouth from August 1903 to February 1904. The first 'cadette' also taken on.

1904 First group of 'cadettes'.

1905 Gertrude Cooke appointed as a cadet in head office. She is the first woman in the department with a university degree.

1912 Rita Armstrong, the first shorthand typist, employed.

1915 First woman employed outside the major cities when a typist employed in Te Kuiti office.

1917 First of the World War One relieving staff engaged.

1921 The greatest number (33) of permanent, full-time female employees before the late 1940s. By the end of the year fewer than ten of the women have permanent positions, as public service regulations designate all female clerical and secretarial staff as temporary workers on a full-time basis.

1946 No women permanently engaged in the whole department and only three on a temporary full-time basis.

1947 Eleven women, some previously temporary typists, taken on permanently. Thirty-one temporary positions created in clerical division, including first women to act as draughting assistants.

1948 All women appointed in previous year made permanent.

1949 Women working in draughting area now designated as draughtswomen.

1952 Women begin work with the Bradma machines.

1955 First women appointed with university degrees since 1905.

1960 Government Service Equal Pay Act.

1969 Audrey Robinson becomes the first woman divisional clerk.

1973 Judy Lenart, first woman assistant valuer appointed.

1974 First women urban field cadets.

1977 Carole Wharfe becomes the second woman appointed as a valuer, and the first since 1903.

1980 Linley Carter, first female district administration officer.

1983 First woman registrar of the Valuers' Registration Board.

1986 Gail Smits and Elizabeth Carruthers promoted to become the first women senior valuers.

1988 First women appointed as managers following restructuring of the department.

1989 First Women Valuers' Conference. Jeanette Haszard appointed first woman managing district valuer. EEO officer appointed.

1991 First woman appointed to the Board of Management.

1992 First Women's Conferences for all women employed in VNZ.

Notes

[1] *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (*NZPD*), 1896, vol. 96, pp.116-18, 789.

[2] *ibid.*, p.125.

[3] Nominal roll of the Civil Establishment of New Zealand, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (*AJHR*), 1874, H-27.

[4] Jones, 1967, p.21; Stanley, 1956, p.28.

[5] Roth, 1990, p.21.

[6] *New Zealand Gazette*, 9 September 1898, pp.1542-43.

[7] In Olssen, 1980, p.165.

[8] Edward Tregear to William Pember Reeves, 7 October 1896 and 22 November 1896. Reeves Papers, qMS P REE, Alexander Turnbull Library.

[9] In Roth, 1987, p.14.

[10] Report of Commission appointed to Inquire and Report upon the unclassified departments of the Public Service of New Zealand, *AJHR*, 1912, H-34, p.29.

[11] Report of the Public Service Commissioner, *AJHR*, 1913, H-14, pp.18-22.

[12] *AHJR*, 1918, H-14, p.2.

[13] *AJHR*, 1919, H-14, p.3.

[14] *AJHR*, 1920, H-14, pp.31-32.

[15] Corner, 1988, p.14.

[16] Aitken, 1978, pp.2, 3.

[17] *AJHR*, 1941, H-14, p.10, 1945, H-14, p.10.

[18] *AJHR*, 1941, H-14, pp.6, 10.

[19] *AJHR*, 1944, H-14, p.1.

[20] Aitken, 1978, p.8.

[21] SSC 1, 25/4/15, Box 63, Female Cadets, National Archives, Wellington.

[22] In Nicholls, 1990, p.278.

[23] Notes for a forthcoming talk on women in the Public Service, 3 November 1967, SSC 1, 25/3/0/20, Box 53, Staff miscellaneous.

[24] Aitken, 1978, p.10.

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